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Clearing of the International Situation.

For some time many of the foremost advocates of closer international co-operation have been much disconcerted at the prospect of the failure of the Third Hague Conference to meet as planned in 1915. There was additional cause for discouragement in the possibility of the non-renewal of the arbitration treaties of 1908 and the opposition to the repeal of the clause in the Panama Canal act giving free passage to American coastwise vessels.

But early in February the aspect of the situation was greatly changed. Announcement was made on February 5 that the United States Government had taken steps toward the calling of the Third International Peace Conference to meet in the summer of 1915 at The Hague. Through the United States Minister to Holland, Dr. Henry Van Dyke, communications were held with Queen Wilhelmina and members of the Netherlands government, and it is understood that the Permanent Hague Committee, which consists of the members of the foreign diplo-

matic body at The Hague, have been charged with the drafting of a program of subjects to be discussed. This program, when completed, will be submitted for approval to all the nations represented.

The Citizens' National Committee, which has been created in this country to increase interest in and promote the holding of the conference, held a session in New York City on February 11, which resulted in the appointment of an executive committee of seventeen members to take such steps as may seem desirable in support of the Government's action. The members of this committee are: Gov. Simeon E. Baldwin, Nicholas Murray Butler, Joseph H. Choate, John Bates Clark, Frederic R. Coudert, John F. Cromwell, John W. Foster, George Gray, George C. Holt, Seth Low, Alfred T. Mahan, Alton B. Parker, Gen. Horace Porter, Charles H. Sherrill, Francis Lynde Stetson, Oscar S. Straus, and Andrew D. White. This committee is certain to have the almost unanimous support and co-operation of the people of the country in any measures it may take, as it represents the national sentiment in favor of the calling of the Third Hague Conference, which has had great weight in causing the Government finally to act in the matter.

On February 5 President Wilson made it known that he favored the repeal of the provision in the Panama Canal act which exempted American coastwise vessels from payment of tolls. Indeed, he has held substantially this view from the beginning. The President regards this Government as morally bound by the terms of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty to place all nations on the same footing as the United States with respect to shipping passing through the canal. He considers the exemption clause as violating treaty agreements with Great Britain, and will do all in his power to have it repealed. A number of Senators and Representatives are strongly opposed to the President's position, but his clearly sound views on the subject, the strong support which is accorded him by the people, and especially by many experienced statesmen, and the international interests involved, make it quite certain that the repeal will be effected.

On January 30 the President had a conference with the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on the subject of the arbitration treaties, as a result of which the committee agreed informally to the renewal of the twenty-four treaties, each of which was made for a term of five years. Immediately thereafter the committee, by a vote of eleven to two, ordered a favorable report on the eight arbitration treaties which have already lapsed. On February 21 the Senate, in executive session, formally ratified